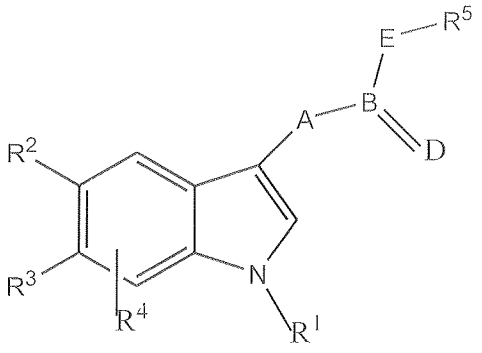
IN THE CLAIMS

1. (previously presented) A method comprising treating an allergic skin disease by topically administering for the first time after an allergic challenge to a subject in need thereof a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of formula (I) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof:



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in which

R^1 is

(i) -C_{1-12}-alkyl, straight-chain or branched-chain or -C_2-C_{12} alkenyl, mono- or polyunsaturated,

optionally mono- or polysubstituted by -OH, -SH, -NH_2, -NHC_{1-6}-alkyl, -$N(C_{1-6}$-alkyl$)_2$, --NHC_{6-14} aryl, -$N(C_{6-14}$aryl$)_2$, -$N(C_{1-14}$aryl$)_2$ -$N(C_{1-6}$alkyl$)(C_{6-14}$aryl), -$NHCOR^6$, -NO_2, -CN, -F, -Cl, -Br, -I, -O-C_{1-6}-alkyl, -O-C_{6-14}-aryl, -$O(CO)R^6$, -S-C_{1-6}-alkyl, -S-C_{6-14}aryl, -SOR^6, -SO_3H, -SO_2R^6, -OSO_2C_{1-6}-alkyl, -OSO_2C_{6-14}aryl, -$(CS)R^6$, -COOH, -$(CO)R^6$, mono-, bi or tricyclic

saturated or mono- or polyunsaturated carbocycles having 3-14 ring members, mono-, bi- or tricyclic saturated or mono-or polyunsaturated heterocycles having 5-15 ring members and 1-6 heteroatoms, which are preferably N, O and S, wherein the C_{6-14}aryl groups and the carbocyclic and heterocyclic substituents for their part can optionally be mono- or polysubstituted by R^4,

(ii) a mono-, bi- or tricyclic saturated or mono- or polyunsaturated carbocycle having 3-14 ring members or a mono-, bi- or tricyclic saturated or mono- or polyunsaturated heterocycle having 5-15 ring members and 1-6 heteroatoms, which are preferably N, O and S, or a carbo- or heterocyclic saturated or mono- or polyunsaturated spirocycle having 3-10 ring members, where heterocyclic systems contain 1-6 heteroatoms, which are preferably N, O and S, optionally mono- or polysubstituted by -OH, -SH, $-NH_2$, NHC_{1-6} alkyl, -N (C_{1-6}-alkyl)$_2$, -NHC_{6-14}aryl, -$N(C_{6-14}aryl)_2$, -$N(C_{1-6}alkyl)$ (C_{6-14}aryl), -$NHCOR^6$ –NO_2, -CN, -F, -Cl, -Br, -I, -O-C_{1-6} alkyl, -O-C_{6-14}-aryl, -$O(CO)R^6$, -S-C_{1-6}-alkyl, -S-C_{6-14}aryl, -SOR^6, -SO_3H, -SO_2R^6,- OSO_2C_{1-6}alkyl, -OSO_2C_{6-14} aryl, -$(CS)R^6$, -COOH, -$(CO)R^6$ mono-, bi- or tricyclic saturated or mono- or polyunsaturated carbocycles having 3-14 ring members, mono-, bi- or tricyclic saturated or mono- or polyunsaturated heterocycles having 5-15 ring members and 1-6 heteroatoms, which are preferably N, O and S, wherein the C_{6-14}aryl groups and the carbocyclic and heterocyclic substituents can optionally be mono- or polysubstituted by R^4,

R^5 is

a mono-, bi- or tricyclic saturated or mono- or polyunsaturated carbocycle having 3-14 ring members or a mono-, bi- or tricyclic saturated or mono- or polyunsaturated heterocycle having 5-15 ring members and 1-6 heteroatoms, which are preferably N, O and S, or a carbo-or heterocyclic saturated or mono-or polyunsaturated spirocycle having 3-10 ring members, where heterocyclic systems contain 1-6 heteroatoms, which preferably N, O and S, optionally mono- or

polysubstituted by -OH, -SH, -NH_2 –NHC_{1-6} alkyl, -$N(C_{1-6}$-alkyl$)_2$, -NHC_{6-14}aryl, -$N(C_{6-14}$aryl$)_2$, -$N(C_{1-6}$alkyl$)(C_{6-14}$aryl), -$NHCOR^6$, –NO_2 -CN, -F, -Cl, -Br, -I, -O-C_{1-5}-alkyl, -O-C_{6-14}-aryl, -O(CO)R^6, -S-C_{1-6}-alkyl, -S-C_{6-14}aryl, -SOR^6, -SO_3H, -SO_2R^6, -OSO_2C_{1-6}alkyl, OSO_2C_{6-14}aryl, -(CS)R^6, -COOH, -(CO)R^6, mono-, bi or tricyclic saturated or mono- or polyunsaturated carbocycles having 3-14 ring members, mono-, bi- or tricyclic saturated or mono- or polyunsaturated heterocycles having 5-15 ring members and 1-6 heteroatoms, which are preferably N, O and S, wherein the C_{6-14}aryl groups and the carbocyclic and heterocyclic substituents can optionally be mono- or polysubstituted by R^4 with the proviso that R^5 contains at least one substituent selected from -F, -Cl, -Br, -I;

R^2, R^3 are hydrogen or -OH, where at least one of the two substituents must be -OH;

R^4 is

-H, -OH, -SH, -NH_2 –NHC_{1-6}-alkyl, -$N(C_{1-6}$-alkyl$)_2$, -NHC_{6-14}aryl, -$N(C_{6-14}$aryl$)_2$, –$N(C_{1-6}$ alkyl) (C_{6-14}aryl), -$NHCOR^6$, -NO_2, -CN, -COOH, - (CO)R^6, -(CS)R^6, -F, --Cl, -Br, -I, -O-C_{1-6}-alkyl, -O-C_{6-14}-aryl, -O(CO)R^6, -S-C_{1-6}-alkyl, -S-C_{6-14}aryl, -SOR^6, -SO_2R^6, -C_1-C_6-alkyl, wherein each aryl or alkyl may be mono- or polysubstituted by -OH, -F, -Cl, -Br, -I;

R^6 is

-H, -NH_2, -NHC_{1-6}-alkyl, -$N(C_{1-6}$-alkyl$)_2$, -NHC_{6-14}aryl, -$N(C_{6-14}$aryl$)_2$, - $N(C_{1-6}$alkyl) (C_{6-14}aryl), -O-C_{1-6}-alkyl, -O-C_{6-14}-aryl, -S-C_{1-6}-alkyl, -S –C_{6-14}aryl,

-C_{1-12}-alkyl, straight-chain or branched-chain,

-C_{2-12}-alkenyl, mono- or polyunsaturated, straight-chain or branched-chain,

mono-, bi- or tricyclic saturated or mono- or polyunsaturated carbocycles having 3-14 ring members,

mono-, bi- or tricyclic saturated or mono- or polyunsaturated heterocycles having 5-15 ring members and 1-6 heteroatoms, which are preferably N, O and S;

A is either a bond, or

$-(CH_2)_{m}-$, $-(CH_2)_m-(CH=CH)_n-(CH_2)_p-$, $-(CHOZ)_m-$, -(C= O)-, -(C =S)-, -(C=N-Z)-, -O-, -S-, -NZ-,

wherein m, p=0-3 and n=0-2 and

Z is

-H, or

$-C_{1-12}$-alkyl, straight-chain or branched-chain,

$-C_{2-12}$-alkenyl, mono- or polyunsaturated, straight-chain or branched-chain,

mono-, bi- or tricyclic saturated or mono- or polyunsaturated carbocycles having 3-14 ring members,

mono-, bi- or tricyclic saturated or mono- or polyunsaturated heterocycles having 5-15 ring members and 1-6 heteroatoms, which are preferably N, O and S;

B is either carbon or sulfur, or – (S=O)-;

D is O, S, CH_2 or N-Z,

where, if B is carbon, D is O, S or CH_2;

E is a bond, or

$-(CH_2)_m-$, -0-, -S-, -(N-Z)-, wherein m and Z have the meaning already described above.

2. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein R^5 is selected from monocyclic saturated or mono- or polyunsaturated carbocycles and heterocycles having at least one halogen substituent.

3. (previously presented) The method of claim 2 wherein R^5 is selected from monocyclic aromatic carbocycles and heterocycles having at least one halogen substituent.

4. (previously presented) The method of claim 3 wherein R^5 is a pyridine ring having at least one halogen substituent.

5. (canceled)

6. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein R^1 is selected from C_1-C_{12} alkyl, which is optionally substituted.

7. (canceled)

8. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein R^2 is OH and R^3 is H.

9. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein A is selected from -(C=O)- and -(CHOH)-.

10. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein B is C.

11. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein D is O.

12. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein E is -(N--H)-.

13. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein compound (I) is (N-3,5-dichloro-4-pyridinyl)-2-[1-(4-fluorobenzyl)-5-hydroxy-1 H-indol-3-yl]-2-oxoacetamide).

14. (canceled)

15. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the disease is allergic dermatitis.

16. (canceled)

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the compound is administered to a skin area which is afflicted with the disease.

18. (previously presented) The method of claim 17 wherein the compound is administered up to 48 h after the allergic challenge.

19. (canceled)

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein a further pharmaceutical agent is administered, wherein said further pharmaceutical agent stimulates cAMP production and is selected from the group consisting of a sympathomimetic amine, a xanthine derivative, a corticosteroid and an adrenal stimulant.

21. (previously presented) The method of claim 20 wherein the further pharmaceutical agent is a corticosteroid.

22. (previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the allergic disease is allergic dermatitis.

23. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising administering a further pharmaceutical agent.